



PENINSULA FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC.

Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, Australia

NEWSLETTER: SEPTEMBER 2012

Working Bee at Paratea Reserve – July 14

Nine members attended to remove weeds at the Paratea Flora and Fauna Reserve in Rosedale Grove, Frankston South. This reserve, maintained by Frankston Council, comprises 7.7 ha of grassy woodland.

According to the Council website at www.frankston.vic.gov.au there have been 130+ native plant species and 80+ bird species recorded there. Plants include White Sallee *Eucalyptus pauciflora*, a subspecies of the Snow Gum. Sugar gliders are said to be found there, as well as the more common possums.

For the day we concentrated on removing flat weeds, as well as some *Watsonia*, and cleaning up some dumped rubbish. Our bird count while we worked was only 11, mostly common birds, but we did find a large patch of Nodding Greenhoods

Pterostylis nutans.

After lunch at Mt Eliza Regional Park we walked the track around and above the quarry, without seeing much of interest. - **Lee Denis**



Photo - Lee Denis

Birdwatching at Warrengine Park, Hastings, July 2

A wet cold blustery morning saw numbers of birdwatchers sharply reduced - in fact reduced to one. Nevertheless, after the rain stopped (mostly) a good day was had. A total of 28 birds, as well as a profusion of fungi, were observed.

Birds included a flock of 15 or so Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoos feasting on the nearby pine trees. These unloved-by-some introduced trees are a great attraction to these cockatoos all over the Peninsula, and their removal is likely to impact on the numbers of these birds. It is a reminder that in a landscape heavily modified by human activity, some of the introduced plants provide valuable habitat and food for native wildlife, and their removal, especially without provision of alternatives, is likely to be highly detrimental.

Other notable sightings included female Golden Whistler, and a troop of White-browed Scrubwrens skipping over open ground near the Creek. Wood Ducks, Ibis and a Heron were seen on the neighbouring paddocks.

Fungi included *Amanita farinaceae*, with its veil fragments hanging from the cap like ragged curtains; puffballs *Scleroderma cepa* and *Morganella pyriformis*, and bracket fungi White Punk (*Laetiporus portentosus*) and Beefsteak Fungus (*Fistulina hepatica*). — **Lee Denis**

Bird List For Warrengine Park Hastings 2 July 2012	
Australian Wood Duck	White-browed Scrubwren
White-faced Heron	Red Wattlebird
Australian White Ibis	White-eared Honeyeater
Purple Swamphen	New Holland Honeyeater
Masked Lapwing	Golden Whistler
Silver Gull	Grey Shrike-thrush

Common Bronzewing	Magpie-Lark
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Grey Fantail
Galah	Grey Butcherbird
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Australian Magpie
Rainbow Lorikeet	Little Raven
Eastern Rosella	Welcome Swallow
Laughing Kookaburra	Common Blackbird
Superb Fairy-wren	Common Starling



Morganella pyriformis Photo - Lee Denis

Dr Anthony Hooper, CEO, Natural Resources Conservation League: *The League's Past, Present and Future* August 8, 2012

The 1939 bushfires were a catalyst for the start of the "Save the Forests Campaign", as the founders felt that trees were not being valued for their role in soil and water conservation. In 1951 this campaign expanded into the Natural Resources League of Victoria. One of the founders was Cyril Isaac, also founder of the State Schools Horticultural Society. Others were from the Soil Conservation Board, the MMBW, and local government.

Every local Council belonged to the League and bought their street trees and other trees from the League's nurseries, which eventually numbered 7. The League promoted retention of roadside vegetation, "An Inseparable Trinity" – trees, soil and water (wildlife was added later) and the co-ordination and promotion of Wattle Day, which evolved into Arbor Week, when school children were given trees from the League's nurseries to plant, and the Junior Tree Lovers League. The nurseries produced and distributed over a million trees annually for local councils, schools and farms. The League also organized Community Planting days.

From the 1960s the League became involved in environmental issues, in particular the Save the Little Desert Campaign. The NRCL received the inaugural State Government "Victoria

Conservation Prize" in 1972 for its work for the Little Desert. Partly as a result of the Little Desert Campaign the State Government established the Land Conservation Council to advise on land use and creation of National Parks.

The NRCL published journals – *Victoria's Resources*, and later, *Trees and Natural Resources*.

In 2003 the NRCL reviewed its activities as many of those it had pioneered had been superseded. The journals closed as other organizations produced similar publications. Local councils, specialist indigenous plant growers, and community nurseries superseded the NRCL nurseries and four were closed, and the Springvale site sold. From 2003- 2010 the NRCL operated environmental education activities at Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre and Warburton, but these were loss making and closed in 2010. Winding up the League was considered, but instead the Board decided to create a philanthropic foundation to support conservation projects into the future. One recipient has been the Devilbend Foundation locally.

The 32 hectare nursery site at Cranbourne West is to be developed as a housing estate, to create affordable and environmentally sustainable housing, with biolinks to Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne and other natural areas as a priority.

It was interesting to compare the history and

development of the NRCL with that of the Victorian National Parks Association, over a similar time frame, which Geoff Durham spoke to

us last year on.

Further information on the NRCL can be found at www.nrcl.org.au — **Judy Smart**

Cranbourne Botanic Gardens – August

Nine members gathered at the Stringybark picnic ground on a chilly day. The weather was much better than forecast, however. Our original schedule had us visiting Brimbank Park on the Maribynong River, but the forecast was so dire that we decided instead to stay local, on what turned out to be a good birding day, with 46 birds sighted.

Leaving the picnic area we walked the Wylies Creek Track — Trig Track circuit, finding the usual waterbirds on the wetlands, including Hardheads, which were common in our local area this winter. As usual, a pair of wedge-tailed Eagles were soaring over the open grassland; Brown Goshawk was also seen here. On the return leg we stopped off at the Perched Swamp, seeing a few honeyeaters and Golden Whistler.

After lunch, and after a tipoff from another birdwatcher, we were able to find Flame Robins in the buffer zone to the south-east of the reserve.

Corellas, Lorikeets and Common Bronzewing were also seen there.

The Bandicoots were not out and about at the picnic area; the only mammal sighted was a Swamp Wallaby. Abundant Wombat diggings were seen however - as well as rabbits.

Being late winter there were few flowers out; they included *Acacia dealbata*, *A. suaveolens*, *A. oxycedrus*, *Epacris impressa*, *Dillwynia* sp, *Hibbertia sericea*, *Leptospermum myrsinoides*, *Leucopogon ericioides*, and one orchid, the Nodding Greenhood *Pterostylis nutans*.

Quite a few frogs were in evidence, including Southern Toadlet, Common Froglet, Banjo Frog, Striped Marsh Frog and Southern Brown Tree Frog

On leaving a short detour to the Australian Garden car park established that the Bell Miners were still in residence at the Depot. — **Lee Denis**

Bird List For Cranbourne Botanic Gardens 11 August 2012

Black Swan	Straw-necked Ibis	Long-billed Corella	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird
Australian Wood Duck	Brown Goshawk	Rainbow Lorikeet	White-eared Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Pacific Black Duck	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	White-naped Honeyeater	Little Raven
Grey Teal	Purple Swamphen	Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	New Holland Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Chestnut Teal	Dusky Moorhen	Laughing Kookaburra	Flame Robin	Common Blackbird
Hardhead	Masked Lapwing	Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Yellow Robin	Common Myna
Australasian Grebe	Pacific Gull	Spotted Pardalote	Golden Whistler	
Hoary-headed Grebe	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Brown Thornbill	Grey Shrike-thrush	
Little Pied Cormorant	Common Bronzewing	Red Wattlebird	Magpie-Lark	
White-faced Heron	Galah	Bell Miner	Grey Fantail	

September meeting: Barrie Hunt, Senior Research Fellow, CSIRO: *The Greenhouse Effect*

Mr Hunt is Honorary Research Fellow at the CSIRO Marine & Atmospheric Research. He has worked in the field of climate modelling for more than 40 years, and was one of the earliest developers of the climate model. Barrie covered the issue of global warming from the perspective of his long experience.

Long-term trends clearly show a steady increase in global temperatures over the last century – however as Barrie outlined, there are a number of areas of disagreement and misunderstanding. Some of the areas he addressed are

- ◆ the 'Greenhouse Effect'
- ◆ the difference between weather and climate
- ◆ the link between global warming and human activity
- ◆ possible strategies

The Greenhouse Effect was originally put forward to describe the moderating effect that the earth's atmosphere has on the temperature range on the planet. It was thought that a greenhouse allows heat energy in through the glass then traps it inside – it is known now that the greenhouse actually works by preventing the warmer air inside mixing with the cooler air outside. In any case, life on earth is made possible by the Greenhouse Effect, and the problem is best described as the *Enhanced Greenhouse Effect*.

As Barrie explained, incoming solar energy is able to pass through the atmosphere, but reflected heat or infra-red energy is trapped in the atmosphere by the 'greenhouse gases', principally

carbon dioxide and water vapour. Without this effect the surface of the earth would be too cold to support life.

The greenhouse gases make up only a tiny fraction of the gases in the atmosphere, and it is hard to grasp the fact that a relatively small change in proportion of such a small component of the atmosphere can have such a profound effect. Based on his extensive experience with climate modelling, Barrie is in no doubt that the effect is real.

There is considerable evidence, from weather records and from things such as ice cores and the study of tree rings, that there has been an increase in carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution, and a more rapid increase expressed as a steepening concentration curve in the last century.

The picture is not one of a single line of increasing temperature, however. Year to year weather variations are superimposed on the long-term climate pattern, with cycles of dry and wet years, warmer and colder years –the recent period of dryer warmer years is thus not due to global warming, but normal variation.

Barrie discussed the difficulty in reducing greenhouse gas emissions whilst accomodating population growth – especially the provision of base load energy for industry, which present renewable energy sources are insufficient for. It is not a particularly difficult conclusion that something has to give. Barrie spoke in favour of nuclear power, although since this is also based on non-renewable sources it would only serve to buy time for the development of renewable sources that can fulfill the needs of an increasing world population. — **Lee Denis.**

SEANA Spring Camp, Bendigo – August 17 -20, 2012

Just four of us went to Bendigo for the August camp – Pat, Coralie and Bruce and me. The others must have known how cold it was going to be at night! Mandurang Hall, on the outskirts of Bendigo, was

the site for the meetings and starting point for excursions. We enjoyed an interesting and well organized weekend. The speaker on Friday night was Rob Moors, Bendigo FNC member, on the prehistory, history and natural history of Bendigo, followed by a musical presentation by Peter Ellis playing some of his collection of historical

instruments – button accordion, tin whistle, harmonica and concertina. What a terrific evening.

On Saturday night it was Moth Magic – the very entertaining Marilyn Hewish showing photos of moths, and talking about her moth-hunting travels, helped by Steve Williams and Ken Harris. Afterwards lights were set up outside with sheets to attract moths, but it was too cold for the moths too!

The highlight for Pat and I was Saturday at Kamarooka and the Northern Whipstick, looking at the mallee country, and being taken to see some spectacular flora – the Whirrakee Wattle, *Cassia artemisioides*, *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* and *G. alpina*, scarlet mintbush, the famous Bendigo waxflowers (*Eriostemon* sp.), the mallees including the rare Kamarooka mallee (*Eucalyptus froggattii*) and many many more. The

birds were interesting too, but no list unfortunately. Although it was early in the season there was plenty to see. — **Judy Smart**



Photo: Judy Smart

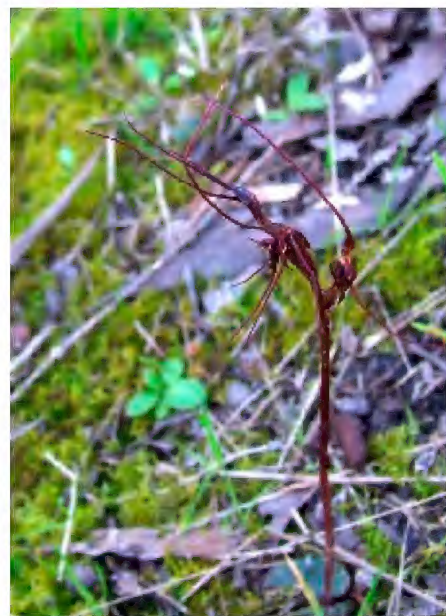
Birdwatching at Bulldog Creek Rd, September

Five members met on a fine, warm day at a favourite birding location. Being early spring we were also on the lookout for wildflowers, especially orchids, and we were not disappointed. Our first sightings were made as soon as we arrived – Fan-tailed Cuckoo calling before landing in the nearby horse paddock. Eastern Rosella, Superb Fairy-wren and Eastern Yellow Robin were also seen without leaving the parking area.

Birds sighted along the road included Golden Whistler, Spotted and Striated Pardalote, Mistletoebird, and a number of honeyeaters including Brown-headed. At a shelter belt of pine trees a flock of Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoos was feasting on the pine nuts, with a continuous rain of discarded cones making walking under the trees a little hazardous. A paddock off to the side held a large population of Straw-necked Ibis — it always looks slightly incongruous to see these birds roosting in dead trees. An Olive-backed Oriole was heard but not, unfortunately, seen. A total of 33 birds was recorded, and did not include a single introduced species.

Orchids were abundant, with large patches of

Nodding Greenhoods (*Pterostylis nutans*), as well as Tall Greenhoods (*P. melagramma*), Maroonhoods (*P. pedunculata*) and Mayflies (*Acianthus caudatus*). Tongue Orchid (*Cryptostylis* sp) leaves were also seen.



Acianthus caudatus Photo: Lee Denis

Plants in flower included *Acacia myrtifolia*, *A. paradoxa*, *A. verticillata*, *Daviesia latifolia*, *Epacris impressa*, *Hovea heterophylla*, *Leucopogon virgatus*. — **Lee Denis**

Bird List For Bulldog Creek Rd 3 September 2012				
Australian Pelican	Eastern Rosella	Yellow Thornbill	Eastern Spinebill	Grey Butcherbird
Straw-necked Ibis	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Red Wattlebird	Eastern Yellow Robin	Australian Magpie
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Laughing Kookaburra	Noisy Miner	Golden Whistler	Little Raven
Galah	Superb Fairy-wren	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush	Mistletoebird
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Spotted Pardalote	White-eared Honeyeater	Magpie-Lark	Welcome Swallow
Rainbow Lorikeet	Striated Pardalote	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Grey Fantail	
Crimson Rosella	Brown Thornbill	White-naped Honeyeater	Olive-backed Oriole	

September Excursion - Gordon Rolfe Reserve/Yaringa, Tyabb

Eight members, plus two visitors, attended on a fine, mild, still, albeit cloudy day. This reserve is noted for its abundant Wedding Bush, among many other plants.

In Flower

Acacia oxycedrus – Spike Wattle
Acacia melanoxylon – Blackwood
Acacia verticillata – Prickly Moses
Banksia marginata – Silver Banksia
Billardiera scandens – Common Apple-berry
Bossiaea cinerea – Common Bossiaea
Chamaescilla corymbosa – Blue Stars
Correa reflexa – Common Correa
Drosera whittakeri – Scented Sundew
Epacris impressa – Common Heath
Goodenia geniculata – Bent Goodenia
Hibbertia prostrata – Bundled Guinea-flower
Hibbertia stricta – Erect Guinea-flower
Leucopogon australis – Spike Beard Heath
Leucopogon virgatus – Common Beard Heath
Leptospermum continentale – Prickly Tea-tree
Leptospermum myrsinoides – Silky Tea-tree

Ricinocarpus pinifolius – Wedding Bush

Orchids

Acianthus caudatus – Mayfly
Acianthus pusillus – Mosquito – finished
Pterostylis concinna – Neat Greenhood
P. curta – Blunt Greenhood
P. melagramma – Tall Greenhood
P. nutans – Nodding Greenhood
P. pedunculata – Maroonhood

Frogs heard

Limnodynastes dumerili - Banjo – in multitudes
Limnodynastes peroni - Striped marsh frog

Birds

Our bird list for the day amounted to 55, most in the bush reserve, a few including Great Egret on the salt marsh, Gannets over the water, ducks on the wetland. Bush birds include Golden Whistlers (almost deafening), Sacred Kingfisher, Red-browed Finch and European Goldfinch. Honeyeaters were abundant. Royal Spoonbill and Cormorants were sighted at nearby Yaringa Boat Harbour. — **Lee Denis**

Bird List For Gordon Rolfe Reserve 15 September 2012				
Pacific Black Duck	Whistling Kite	Eastern Rosella	White-eared Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Grey Teal	Swamp Harrier	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Grey Currawong
Chestnut Teal	Purple Swamphen	Laughing Kookaburra	White-naped Honeyeater	Little Raven
Australasian Gannet	Dusky Moorhen	Sacred Kingfisher	New Holland Honeyeater	House Sparrow
Pied Cormorant	Pacific Gull	Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Yellow Robin	Red-browed Finch
Little Black Cormorant	Silver Gull	Spotted Pardalote	Golden Whistler	European Goldfinch

White-faced Heron	Spotted Turtle-Dove	White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Welcome Swallow
Great Egret	Common Bronzewing	Brown Thornbill	Magpie-Lark	Tree Martin
Australian White Ibis	Crested Pigeon	Red Wattlebird	Grey Fantail	Little Grassbird
Straw-necked Ibis	Galah	Noisy Miner	Willie Wagtail	Common Starling
Royal Spoonbill	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird	Common Myna

Annual General Meeting July 11

At the AGM the position of Treasurer was passed on from Doris Weigert to Linda Edwards, as Doris is travelling at present. Other positions are as follows:

President: Mrs Pat Gomm

Secretary: Mrs Judy Smart

Committee: Coralie Davies, Heather Ducat, Rosemary Rees, William Walker, Doris Weigert, Lee Denis.

It was decided to change the meeting start time from 8pm to 7:30 pm.

Upcoming events:

The Club's 60th birthday celebration on Saturday, November 17, 2012, from 11am to 3pm - light lunch, displays, memorabilia, speakers, at the usual meeting room, Uniting Church 16 High St Frankston. All members welcome. Bring a plate if possible.

Excursion to Werribee Treatment Plant, December 15 - travelling by Community Bus. A rare chance to visit this birding mecca.

SEANA Camp, Merricks, March 15-18, 2013.

Peninsula Field Naturalists Club Inc

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month with a field trip the following Saturday. Further information and current Programme of Activities can be found at our website.

President:
Mrs Pat Gomm

All correspondence to
Secretary

Annual Subs due July —=

Adult	\$20
Concession	\$15

Treasurer:
Ms Linda Edwards

Newsletter edited by Lee Denis

www.home.vicnet.net.au/~penfnc

BHL



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